The Alternative "Marketing Revolution": Infra-power, the Compromising Consumer and Goodwill Creation

Abstract

Purpose: This paper reviews the contributions of Harry Tosdal, a pioneer of sales and marketing management. It serves to puncture a variety of marketing myths and illuminate a completely neglected concept of the consumer.

Design/methodology/approach: This account is based on a close reading of Tosdal's publications.

Findings: Tosdal articulated a highly nuanced interpretation of marketing management, market research and sales force management. Each of these elements was keyed into fostering goodwill between firm and customer. Perhaps most importantly, he provides a counterpoint to the idea that the consumer is sovereign in the marketplace. Instead, he makes a case that the ontology of the market is riven by compromise.

Originality/value: This paper highlights the concept of the compromising consumer. Arguably, this is a much more empirically realistic conception of the agency we possess in the marketplace than the idea that we move markets in ways absolutely consistent with our desires.

Keywords: History of marketing thought; marketing management; infra-power; marketing concept; compromise; the compromising consumer; goodwill; relationship marketing.

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"…memories are short" (Levitt, 1960, p. 47).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the contributions of a pioneer of marketing, Harry R. Tosdal (1889-1978). He was central to the axiological broadening of sales management set in motion by practitioners – most notably by Walter H. Cottingham (1916), the President of The Sherwin-Williams Company (a paint firm) – which pluralised the domain to include elements aligned with marketing management (Cunningham, 1958; Jones, 1971). Tosdal was a major figure, providing one of the earliest, but not most developed, articulations of marketing management which he treated as a synonym for sales management, often switching terms interchangeably (Cunningham, 1958; Strong and Hawes, 1990). His preference, though, was for "marketing management" (e.g. Tosdal, 1921, p. xx, 1933/1940, p. 1).

He outlines an agenda that sits comfortably with marketing management as it is envisaged today. In fact, it comes close to a four P's definition: "The main function of business…is to create or procure desired goods and services and to furnish them to consumers in proper quantities at proper times and at satisfactory prices" (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 1). Marketing management, according to Tosdal, involved the formulation of general marketing and sales plans; managing marketing and sales coordination; directing product and sales research; weighing up marketing communications methods (he was a proponent of Integrated Marketing Communications); determining price and discount rates; providing or outsourcing financing arrangements and ensuring the delivery of the product to the right place, at the correct time (Tosdal, 1921, 1923a).

When we look through the prism of his publications, the sales manager had to avoid unsystematic adherence to tradition or rules of thumb. In their place, he must adopt a scientific attitude (Tosdal, 1933/1940). By the latter Tosdal means that management had to use all relevant sources of data to enlighten their decision-making. Empirical research and "facts" supported intuition (Tosdal, 1933/1940) and minimised "guesswork" (Tosdal, 1921). The organisation of firm activities was, in short, predicated on detailed information about the market, customers, competitors and the effects of promotional campaigns. All of this material functioned to identify implementation problems, as well as the profit being generated per salesperson, at departmental and branch level, by each customer and product line (Tosdal, 1921) and was key in disciplining staff members (Tosdal, 1933/1940). This envelopment of the company in a web of documents and records was a means to exert "infra-power" (Foucault, 2015) that was targeted at cultivating and affirming "goodwill" between firms and their customer base. Goodwill was central to business longevity[i].

In Foucault's conceptual and epistemological orbit (see Tadajewski, 2009a, 2011a), knowledge production is closely linked to power, with knowledge – in this case, knowledge of the sales worker and their activities – being mobilised to support organisational agendas (Foucault, 2015). The individual subject, then, is enmeshed within a documentary and statistical matrix that facilitates evaluation, control and reconstitution (Jacques, 1996). They are subject to the "gaze" of senior personnel. Firstly, the gaze of the "sales foreman", then the sales manager, and ultimately the upper echelons of the company. These are the "relays" and "reciprocal supports" that enable the operationalisation of power relations (Foucault, 2006, p. 4).

Power, in this case, is not simply repressive (Foucault, 1979). Attempts are made to ensure it is deployed as discreetly as possible. Foucault uses the term "colourless" to signify how it is meant to form the backdrop of social relations (Foucault, 2006, p. 22). It is productive and shapes the individual, helping form disciplined actors who will play their allotted roles (e.g. Foucault, 2006, p. 56). The constitution of workers provided a stable labour force able to interact successfully with high value customers, helping the firm continue its expansionist march across national and international markets (e.g. Foucault, 2006, p. 73). Power, in other words, normalises the behaviour of the sales worker and is enacted because it is – to some extent – pleasurable (Foucault, 1979). Pleasure in this case is multi-faceted. It is not merely conditional on financial payments. Working in line with organisational objectives contributes to career success. Career success enhances self-concept and leads to other opportunities.

Within an industrial arena, infra-power was a way to exert influence over the workforce by making them subject to intervention. It accounted for their time, energy and often literal subject position by tracking them in the field. It maximises their "labour-power" (Foucault, 2015) whilst drawing an "endless extraction of knowledge" from each operative (Foucault, 2006, p. 77). Tosdal, for the purposes of this paper, provides us with detailed insight into the disciplinary politics of the sales organisation as it was envisaged in the first half of the twentieth century (see also Fougère and Skålén, 2012).

His corpus of publications allows us to trace the "capillary" nature of power (Foucault, 2006, p. 40), focusing on the roles performed by figures like the "sales foreman" in improving sales efficiency and effectiveness. Most often the ultimate aim was the prolongation of business operations. This was achieved through the cultivation, affirmation and invocation of goodwill. Our account thereby adds further flesh to the writings of those who have studied Tosdal previously (e.g. Cunningham, 1958; Strong and Hawes, 1990), by engaging more closely with his written output, highlighting a number of themes and issues that escaped attention in the above papers, connecting these newly excavated features to contemporary debates in marketing theory.

Our Foucaultian framework directs our attention to the legitimation of marketing and salesmanship, the conceptualisation of science and scientific method being deployed, and the disciplinary tools and techniques used to maximise sales worker pliability. As we foreground, by articulating reasonably consistent boundaries around both producer and consumer behaviour, Tosdal tries to defuse the idea that the former was more powerful than the latter. Nonetheless, his work does not sit comfortably with the idea that the consumer is sovereign. Nor did that of his contemporaries (e.g. Hess, 1935; Hovde, 1936; Tipper, 1935; Weaver, 1935). This is a notion that has been overplayed in marketing thought, with very few exceptions (e.g. Ward, 2009). This paper thus marks an effort to decentre the concept of the "sovereign consumer" (see also Dixon, 1992/2008).

Tosdal describes the producer-consumer dyad as marked by compromise and he unravels the multiple ways in which compromise forms an ontological characteristic of the marketplace (e.g. Faville, 1936; Weaver, 1935). The image of the consumer that surfaces in his work is the "compromising consumer" (cf. Cova *et al*., 2015). It is a conceptualisation that has never been highlighted in studies devoted to this era and is not cited as a figure in the ideological architecture of marketing thought in recent accounts (e.g. Kennedy and Laczniak, 2016).

This concept has political-economic significance rather than solely being the by-product of an incisive mind. It is articulated at the point in American industrial history when large numbers of people were unemployed, struggling to make ends meet, and were potentially open to alternative political-economic organising structures like socialism or communism (Hotchkiss, 1938; Rorty, 1936; Tosdal, 1957). Talking about compromise was another way – these were manifold at the time – to reaffirm that while the consumer was not automatically a sovereign actor (Ward, 2009) or the marketing system as "balanced" in its exchange processes as some would claim (Lester, 1935; White, 1927), neither was it completely biased against the customer, worker and other stakeholders (Tosdal, 1933/1940). This was part of a series of moves to defuse the criticism of the marketing system at this historical juncture.

Tosdal's conceptualisation of the consumer as a compromiser does, naturally, resonate. Very few of us have complete freedom in the marketplace (Tadajewski *et al*., 2014). Even the wealthy and famous have their choices structured in fairly discernible ways (Atik and Firat, 2013). For the rest of us, our decisions are the products of choice processes which are, in certain industries, made a number years ahead, by large industrial actors whose decisions form the conditions of possibility for our own (Tosdal, 1957). The compromises begin early and involve the entire supply chain. Lest we feel downbeat, Tosdal's work is not merely a reminder that our agency is circumscribed in the marketplace. His writing underscores a positive – but still instrumentally driven – account of the central function of ethics in fostering profitable customer relationships (e.g. Tosdal, 1957, p. 65).

Within his publications, ethics and marketing practice are not mutually exclusive. In various ways, the ongoing exchange relations that marketing wants to create have to be founded on ethics, trust and integrity. This has been known for a very long time and we unpack these debates, focusing on the concept of goodwill, in some detail. This allows us to add a greatly needed level of nuance to recent "hermeneutic" attempts to track the conception of the consumer in marketing thought. Kennedy and Laczniak (2016), for example, argue that a customer orientation focuses on the consumer; that trust and integrity are central to ongoing success in the marketplace; and that ethics is important in cultivating trust. They make the somewhat stronger case that these features – trust, integrity and ethics – are the main factors underwriting the shift from transaction to relationship marketing. Their conclusion that these intertwined elements should underwrite a revitalised marketing going forward misses the point that the historical period they examine – roughly the entire twentieth century – was interweaved with related debates (e.g. Jones and Tadajewski, 2011; Tadajewski, 2011b; in press; Tadajewski and Jones, 2012; cf. Pressey, 2016).

With this in mind, let us explore Tosdal's work. As we will see, his arguments mirror those Kennedy and Laczniak want to promote to our students. Tosdal stresses ethics, social responsibility, customer retention and goodwill. He would not, it is safe to say, have been surprised at the conclusions of Kennedy and Laczniak that marketing students, scholars and practitioners needed to register their social responsibility.

Tosdal's writing is worthy of study for a number of reasons. It adds an historical dimension to contemporary research that admits its own unmooring from our genealogical past (Kennedy and Laczniak, 2016). It provides us with a new concept of the consumer that stands in marked contrast to the sovereign individual who is rhetorically invoked in marketing theory. It destabilises the idea that the pursuit of goodwill or relationship formation was not a feature of business practice before the 1970s. Overall, this paper will underscore the effects of infra-power within marketing organisations, thereby deepening our knowledge of these capillary power relations (Fougère and Skålén, 2012). Connected to this, we introduce a new element from Foucault's lexicon for scholars to utilise in their efforts to connect the punitive, productive and pleasurable power relations involved in the extension of marketing practice and ossified within its theoretical and conceptual supports. Once again, a return to the archive illuminates lost detail, connections to contemporary perspectives and adds nuance where it is absent.

Harry Tosdal

Tosdal is routinely hailed as an important contributor to the development of marketing thought. Reading his books and articles, it is not hard to appreciate the immense effort he made in producing extensive literature reviews, writing case studies and by virtue of his commitment to close contact with industry. He was a careful, critical reader, often incisive in his evaluations. He was a supporter of the marketing system, yet not unwavering.

He did regularly voice his support of the free enterprise system (Tosdal, 1942b, 1957), saying that he believed it was the best mechanism available for meeting the provisioning needs of the majority. Marketing and selling, he submitted, improved standards of living, contributed to societal betterment, "public welfare" and economic stability (Tosdal, 1940, p. 70). At times, his arguments were a testament to manifest destiny. This was the idea that America should spread its ideas, ideals and values across the globe (Tadajewski *et al*., 2014). In the context of World War II, it is not wholly unexpected that a similar logic should play out through his ruminations on marketing, the war and the spread of consumerist values:

> From a selfish point of view of the United States, we may find it desirable…[to diffuse] the American standard of living…wider and wider. Wants create means of satisfaction. Eventually the war may prove to have given an impetus to desire and understanding so that American influence may penetrate into every area where human beings are trying to live a better and more satisfying life (Tosdal, 1942b, p. 77).

He could be critical of the industrial system and acknowledged there were problems that required resolution. Abuses and unequal power relations skewed the benefits from exchange. But, in comparison with planned economic systems like those emerging in the Soviet Union, Tosdal held firmly to his belief that the capitalist system of the United States was – notwithstanding ongoing issues with efficiency (Shaw, 1990) – still the most successful economic system ever devised (Tosdal, 1940). This was his baseline, his market-oriented philosophy. This value system would assume centre stage in marketing thought in the 1950s (Mazur, 1953; Monieson, 1988) and continues to be reaffirmed today (Wilkie and Moore, 1999).

In their useful summary of Tosdal's contributions to marketing, Strong and Hawes (1990) point out that he pioneered the development of sales management education. He was one of the many marketing scholars who travelled to Germany (and elsewhere) for their education in the early twentieth century (Jones and Monieson, 1990; Jones and Tadajewski, 2015). Post higher education, Tosdal moved through a number of prominent university positions before landing at the Harvard Business School where he would remain until the end of a long and successful career (Cunningham, 1958).

For early pioneers, going out into the marketplace, speaking to practitioners and using their knowledge to flesh out principles of marketing practice was part of the course (Bartels, 1976). Scholars needed material to teach and there little available until they collected it. Tosdal rolled up his literal and metaphorical sleeves – armed with the intellectual and data collection muscle of research assistants and co-authors – and willingly headed out into the market. His scholarly interests were many. Nonetheless, like other academics of the period, he did not just provide descriptive and normative guidance about best practice. Tosdal's publications have to be seen as part of the attempt to legitimate marketing activity (Bartels, 1976). There was a need for these efforts.

Marketing was trying to cement its position within the university and industrial system. As a practice, it required considerable buffering during a period when the costs of distribution were rising (Shaw, 1990), when some business people were not providing good quality products and services (Nystrom, 1932), and where there was clamour for social change and alternative political-economic arrangements (Rorty, 1936). Tosdal's work tries to contribute to disciplinary and practical legitimacy by correcting the various misunderstandings of marketing's role in distribution and society.

He wanted to highlight the contribution of marketing and selling so that this activity was socially valorised, so that universities and businesses were able to attract the next generation of students who would not feel embarrassed by their career choice or seek job opportunities elsewhere (Tosdal, 1957). As part of this project, marketers had to engage in public relations campaigns that underscored their service to society (e.g. Tadajewski, in press). They had to appreciate that their audience would perceive them as representatives of "selfish" organisations intent on making a profit (Tosdal, 1936, p. 202). This was the primary motive for corporate existence[ii] (Bakan, 2005). Tosdal registered it and said there was little point denying it. Even so, a concerted public relations campaign would help elicit social sanction. This was not some ramified or collusive campaign. Instead, it would be accomplished by the activities of educators, practitioners and other interested stakeholders, all promoting and affirming better business practices in their own domains. This often meant tying firm activities to ethics and social responsibility (e.g. Tosdal, 1957).

Companies with marketplace and social legitimacy would be more likely to attract employees, thereby stabilising their workforce, reducing labour turnover and controlling costs. The adroit marketer had to produce goods and offer services at low cost which met customer needs. This supported their claims to improve purchasing power and contribute to quality of life. Business proficiency, ethics and savvy public relations would thus help legitimise the marketing system for an admixture of instrumental and ethical reasons: "It is necessary…in these days more and more to have a reputation as a good employer, as a desirable citizen, so as to be relieved of added costs of governmental regulation and restrictions" (Tosdal, 1936, p. 202).

Tosdal was a voracious reader, consuming and distilling the marketing literature for students, scholars, practitioners and social critics alike. And he was one of those passionate "missionaries for the marketing concept" that swept the planet in the aftermath of the Second World War (Bradshaw and Tadajewski, 2011; Cunningham, 1958; Tadajewski *et al*., 2014). But, his writings are not quaint windows into a naïve vision of marketing and sales practice. If we believe the arguments of Vargo and Lusch (2004), then the period when Tosdal was writing was pre-marketing concept. The same could be said of Kennedy and Laczniak (2016) who make effectively the same argument. If we trust Webster (1988), this was a time when sales practitioners were pursuing volume considerations irrespective of profit potentialities. All of these notions are problematic. We will continue to undercut them in the next section.

Marketing Management, the Marketing Concept and Profit

Tosdal does not use the signifier: "the marketing concept". He refers to the need to focus on the customer (Tosdal, 1933/1940), often specifying that this orientation is a comparatively recent phenomenon. While this point can be contested (Jones and Richardson, 2007; Tadajewski, 2015a, 2015b), he adds nuance inasmuch as he knew that economics did signal its attention to the customer and argue that consumption should direct production. However, this was theoretical lip-service (Tosdal, 1939a). Writers would gesture to Adam Smith, much less frequently to J.S. Mill, and then discuss abstractions like demand curves. They did not actually study consumer needs and desires.

In vociferous terms, Tosdal critiqued the distance between the models, laws and generalisations produced by economists and the real world. These were, he opined, "so broad as to be worthless for the solution of most specific business problems" (1939a, p. 9). It was only in the early twentieth century, he added, that scholars had gone beyond theoretical or conceptual articulations to study the market and consumer using all the primary and secondary resources available. He leaves the reader in no doubt as to the importance he ascribes to the customer. This is not an unusual interpretation of shifting marketplace dynamics. Such attention was one of a number of "general changes" taking place in the "marketing field" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 156). In one short quotation, he deflates assertions about the 1950s being the inflexion point for the emergence of a customer orientation (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) or the idea that organisations were concerned with securing volume over profit (Webster, 1988). In his own words, the literature displays recognition of:

> The increasing emphasis upon the consumer and his wants and needs…The increasing recognition of the fact that volume of sales and volume of profit do not necessarily accompany each other – in other words, the development of a more balanced viewpoint as to the interacting relationships of volume of sales, gross margins and operating expense (Tosdal, 1933a, pp. 156-157).

Like a number of his contemporaries, Tosdal illuminates how practitioners engage in proactive product planning based on customer requirements (e.g. 1933a, p. 161). To ensure their products are successful in the hyper-competitive marketplace, any company "must endeavor as closely as possible to produce those things which consumers want" (Tosdal, 1936, p. 195), since it enables them "to make products which are easier to sell" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 161). This requires research: "executives have realized that it is only by constant, careful, unremitting study that it is possible to find out approximately what the consumer will buy" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 162). In equal measure, he encouraged his readers to foster connections throughout the supply chain, sharing information where appropriate. Doing so would enable manufacturers to gain insight; retailers would be able to access samples of products to test market, thereby reducing their risk exposure; and checks could be made about the appeal value of advertisements to determine if they were misfiring (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 163).

Historically speaking, practitioners have long been interested in profit, not only sales levels (Jones and Richardson, 2007). Sales volume was widely studied for various reasons, but academics repeatedly stressed that it was "misleading" to use it as a metric of success due to the divergence between sales volume and profit earnings (e.g. Tosdal, 1953a, p. 45). Let us be clear on this matter, sales volume was important. It helped determine the performance of sales workers in the field (e.g. Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 68) – albeit supplemented with other indicators (discussed below). It was not the driving force of business activity. Volume considerations could lead – as Webster does identify correctly – to the idea that every sale was a good sale. However, most educated observers knew that customers differed in terms of their desirability and profitability.

Profit was given priority in Tosdal's reflections (e.g. Tosdal, 1923a, pp. 74, 82). It was the motor of the free enterprise system, with practitioners manufacturing and distributing their wares on the basis of "demand by the satisfaction of which he expects to profit…He endeavors to increase buyer valuations of his products in order to increase either [the] amount or stability of profit" (Tosdal, 1940, p. 67). As such, "the business administrator needs to know both generally and in detail what the consumer will buy at profitable prices. He needs to know this sufficiently in advance of consumer purchase action so that the planning necessary for large scale production may be carried out" (Tosdal, 1939a, p. 4). Relatedly, the focus for marketing actors was "the transfer of ownership of goods at prices which will yield a profit" (Tosdal, 1940, p. 62). In even more blunt terms, he asserts that "there is no alternative other than sale at a price –preferably a price which covers his costs and yields a profit. Continued failure to sell at such a price ordinarily leads to disaster" (Tosdal, 1940, pp. 65-66). Profit, then, seems to be salient (e.g. Tosdal, 1921, p. 1, 1933b, p. 304, 1933/1940, pp. 2, 354) and increasingly difficult to earn in a competitive environment (e.g. Hersey, 1936, p. 252; Tosdal, 1933b, p. 301).

For Tosdal, what marked the 1920s and accelerated after the onset of the financial crisis, was greater attention to the customer and their requirements. Producers were discouraged from manufacturing excessively high quality products because it gratified their sense of self. Marketplace needs were the axis. Tougher financial strictures and the growth of discretionary purchases, all heliographically focused attention on product planning, cost reductions and the development of goods and services consistent with purchasing power. Of late, he wrote, there has been:

> …increased emphasis placed upon consumer wants and needs as a guide to good marketing management. While serious students of marketing have continuously recognized this viewpoint…manufacturers as a whole have been giving only lip service to the consideration of customer wants and needs. This indictment should be broadened…to include other producers, as well as wholesalers, retailers, and other middlemen. Evidence is accumulating to show that radical changes are beginning to affect a larger and larger proportion of our better managed enterprises…The change which is occurring today is in the nature of a long delayed translation of theory into practice (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 157).

This is where Tosdal introduces marketing concept related ideas. He even uses revolutionary phrasing to describe the changes taking place[iii]. Before Keith (1960) uttered his immortal words about the marketing revolution at Pillsbury which he misleadingly claimed diffused to the rest of industry, Tosdal was referencing "the marketing revolution" (1936, p. 196). While he was initially circumspect about the extent of these changes (e.g. Tosdal, 1921, p. 3, 1927, p. 35) – as were other commentators of the period (e.g. White, 1927) – the modifications taking place, across many industries, and the speed with which marketing practice assumed greater prominence in the business community, underscored that "in the future" people "may speak of the changes in the score of years from 1920 to 1930 as constituting a revolution in marketing management" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 164). He was precise about what this meant: "It is evident that knowledge of consumer needs and wants is vitally important to the marketer and producer" (Tosdal, 1936, pp. 196-197). This knowledge could be derived from secondary sources (e.g. government reports), their own past sales figures (e.g. Tosdal, 1939a, p. 13), the insights collected by salespeople, from the experiences of competitors and trade associations or via formalised market and consumer research.

As is often the case with Tosdal's writing, the figure of the consumer, in this case the person who responds to market research, is more complicated – and empirically realistic – than the cardboard figures who pepper our research publications and methods texts.

Respondents have bad memories, do not always tell the truth and can be evasive. In short, they are human.

Market Research, Epistemology and the Consumer: Misdirection and Lies

Conventionally, practitioners have used introspection to make sense of the marketplace. They reflected on their own needs and extrapolated these to the consumer. Tosdal (1936, 1939a) fully appreciates why this approach still has currency. It is quick and easy. It was often used in business and advertising research, sometimes being conjoined to interviews, group discussions and ethnographic approaches (Tadajewski, 2016). This said, he does flag up the limitations of introspection. Given the separation of producer and consumer, it should not be assumed that they possess identical preferences. A wealthy manufacturer of shoes living in New York does not have the same preferences as a grocery clerk in Lebanon, Kansas.

He is notably critical of various research approaches. Budgetary studies are castigated for their limited samples, restriction to "lower income groups", and failure to provide executives with insight into what people actually want to buy after they have satisfied their core needs (Tosdal, 1936, p. 199). Budget studies might indicate what people buy, but not how satisfied they are with their purchases. By contrast, "family living surveys" were useful for elucidating what people were consuming. Their "general lack of detail" was still a major limitation (Tosdal, 1939a, p. 11). He often sang the praises of the research being conducted by the government. The publications distributed by the Department of Commerce were particularly prized. They enumerated the products being bought in a large number of cities across the United States; obviously, though, research conducted by the business community was the most valuable, as it fulfilled the needs of the individual organisation funding it.

Tosdal's intellectual movement when reviewing these approaches implies a celebration of methodological choice. Research steadily telescopes on to actual consumption habits, drawing upon questionnaires, interviewing and pantry studies. Actually speaking to the consumer, he suggested, was taking place more often, but less frequently than was desirable. In expressing the value of market and customer research to students and executives alike, he affirms the importance of secondary and primary research. Like methodological textbooks today, he articulates the limitations of the former and the costs of the latter. Nevertheless, he underlines that field research which has scientific credibility and validity (i.e. draws on representative samples) is the gold standard.

Tosdal often parsed this call for the business community to undertake research in two ways. Firstly, he argued that psychological knowledge could help unravel consumer behaviour. Secondly, he tended to undermine the utility of psychological research as it was represented in the literature to date (i.e. mainly as basic motive lists). Utility, here, meant the prediction and control of customer practice (e.g. Tosdal, 1939a, 1939b, 1957). This *largely* positivistic conception of field investigation underwrote his epistemological and methodological ruminations (e.g. Tosdal, 1923a, p. 83, 1940, p. 69). He habitually remarked upon the need for scientific credibility (e.g. Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 15), the desirability of valid samples (within reason and these were a reflection of cost), the cachet of statistics, whilst registering that not all human behaviour is amenable to statistical representation (e.g. Tosdal, 1921, pp. 6, 9-10, 1927, p. 11).

To press a point home, we gestured to Tosdal exhibiting *largely* positivistic credentials. His statements and methodological injunctions make labelling him difficult. For starters, he did not believe that marketing or sales management was a science, it "is an art" (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 3; see also Weaver, 1934). His evaluation of the lack of scientific status was a function of a subscription to an understanding of science consistent with that of mid-century writers. In his contribution to the “art versus science” debates, Buzzell (1964, p. 13) claimed that a marketing science would display a systematic structure of knowledge, core theories and “general principles”. For Tosdal, sales management does not possess a “classified body of knowledge” (1933/1940, p. 3). It does, however, have practitioners and scholars who adopt a scientific style of thinking and use this to inform their activities which were – he hoped and encouraged – based upon the guidance of the theories, concepts and empirical methods of pertinent disciplines.

His methodological orientation is, even so, more complicated than we have hinted. This hinges on the fact that the methods and analytic techniques usually associated with positivistic research – questionnaires and statistical analyses – are subject to criticism by Tosdal. They cannot often be used as rigorously as he thinks is appropriate. If anything, this makes him a truly scrupulous marketing scientist who uses all methods provided they are suitable for purpose. He does not appear wedded to any single approach. At one point, for example, he is unusually critical of questionnaire research: “In general, the use of the questionnaire cannot be particularly recommended for business concerns” (Tosdal, 1927, p. 15). He pointed out that those using this method were “frequently unsuccessful in securing a sufficient number of replies to enable conclusions to be drawn…Obviously, to expect uninterested parties to answer a questionnaire containing sometimes very personal questions is to expect the impossible” (Tosdal, 1927, p. 16). In addition, he proposes that the costs might be understated. If few completed returns are forthcoming, then alternative methods were probably appropriate. It may have been cheaper to use an interviewing strategy. And this point leads to his own preferred method for studying marketplace action: “The last method, and for many purposes, the best method, is personal investigation, either by employees – such as salesmen or members of a research department – or by outside and disinterested parties” (Tosdal, 1927, p. 16).

Tosdal is consequently a nuanced thinker who was pluralistic in disciplinary and methodological terms. In this respect, he is at the vanguard, with his methodological choices consistent with other writers on scientific marketing management like Percival White. This is not a great surprise. Tosdal cites White’s texts in various places (e.g. 1927, p. 98, 1933/1940, p. 40). What is interesting is that Tosdal’s conception of the consumer-respondent is a multifaceted figure. As mentioned above, he registers that practitioners need to speak directly to their target market. They need to probe past purchases, current interests and future desires. He was acutely aware that since the consumer was a dynamic being, that the same would be true of their preference structures (e.g. Tosdal, 1927, pp. 37-38, 1957, p. 51, 62). More than this, his remarks indicate that respondents cannot always be trusted to articulate their true beliefs for a number of reasons, some of which were conscious attempts at misdirection, others were unconscious: “buyers may not know, or may not be willing to tell what they know, about their own buying practices, attitudes and habits. Furthermore, buyers may not act as they say they will act” (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 17). Since his remarks have not been aired widely, it is worth reprinting them in full. Referring to the growing use of “direct” “questioning and observing the consumer at first hand”, he writes:

> This approach has been used to secure more specific information as to past purchases, and past, present, and future attitudes…Such questioning and observation proceed on the assumption that declared intentions, conscious or unconscious attitudes and past actions in purchasing or in refraining from purchasing, should furnish reliable guides to future marketing action. Even such little experience as has been had in this respect, however, shows that declared intentions may not be true guides to action and that true

> attitudes are difficult to ascertain with the techniques so far perfected (Tosdal, 1936, p. 200).

He takes these ideas further in later work. So, while empirical research was gaining adherents and credibility, it would be hampered by human nature for the foreseeable future:

> It is in the development and improvement of techniques of observation that students of business may look for the most important help in building a temporary structure to bridge the informational gap between producer and consumer…students of psychology both in the laboratory and in the field have contributed to the development particularly of the questionnaire and the interview and to the establishment of techniques for securing information from the consumer and interpreting it when obtained. The use of psychological methods in the conduct of market studies for business is in a fairly early stage of development, yet substantial advances have been made in the formulation of questions, the conduct of interviews and the interpretations of results. *It has been learned, for instance, that some of the more obvious methods of questioning are to be avoided under some circumstances. At times a simple straight-forward asking of a question does not bring a corresponding simple answer to that question. It brings lies, evasions, rationalizations or other answers* (Tosdal, 1939a, p. 7; emphasis added).

In spite of these stumbling blocks, empirical enquiry would place marketing on an evidence-based footing. Reflecting this, Tosdal proposes that marketers should cooperate with economists, biologists, psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists to make headway in understanding human behaviour (Tosdal, 1936, 1939a). These disciplines are useful for a number of reasons. In the first place, human behaviour is a combination of individual and group influence (Tosdal, 1958). Secondly, within these bounds, it is an admixture of rationality and emotionality, with emphasis on emotion channelling thinking and performance (e.g. Tosdal, 1939b, p. 514). All in all, this displays appreciation that each discipline had the potential to illuminate different aspects of consumption practice.

The structure of Tosdal's (1940) argument is analogous to Strong's (1925) review of "theories of selling", moving from references to the Awareness-Interest-Desire-Action framework through to behaviourist perspectives and on to Strong's own personal conceptual preference – the dynamic being. This is the idea that the consumer, their needs and requirements are subject to change, modification and only partially amenable to direction by the marketing actor (Strong, 1925). While practitioners should be attentive to the dynamic consumer, this does not mean always giving them what they want. The relationship between the producer, marketer and client is not one where the former groups completely influence the latter or where the latter are uncritical absorbers of whatever industry produces. This shoots a hole in the narrative proffered by Robert J. Keith (1960) with regards to the production and sales eras. Both of these periods were characterised by contestable assumptions. The first stressed the willingness of customers to buy whatever was pushed into the marketplace, thereby assuming that supply drives demand (i.e. Say's Law). The second holds that people could be forced to buy irrespective of their real needs. Producers and consumers alike are not this unsubtle. This is not to say that people never buy what marketers produce or that they cannot be misled via "supersalesmanship" (White, 1927) into purchasing things they do not need or want. The point is that most people were not this credulous (cf. Tadajewski, 2013) and business people were aware that it was not in their interest to shunt unwanted goods on to their target market (Tadajewski, 2008).

Marketing professionals did, nonetheless, want to mould buying behaviour (Tadajewski *et al.*, 2014). They attempted to communicate with their audience, shaping their cravings, so that these chimed with the outputs of mass production. Manufacturers and merchants were not always successful, but to achieve the economies of scale associated with mass production and distribution, they had to try. Neither actor here – organisation or consumer – could totally dictate to the other (Tosdal, 1957). They compromised and these compromises reverberated throughout the economy (see also Weaver, 1935, p. 97).

Reflecting the Ontology of the Marketplace: The Compromising Consumer

For Tosdal, an organisation makes multiple compromises in determining what products and services to supply (Tosdal, 1953d, 1957). Customers compromised as a result of their personal interests, status orientation and income level (Tosdal, 1939a, 1940). The ontology of the marketplace thus refracts compromise[iv]: "The necessity of making compromises between what would be ideally suited to each particular consumer's needs and wants, is inescapable" (Tosdal, 1957, p. 64). Exchange relations are consequently permeated by concessions:

> It is common knowledge that compromises and shifts will be resorted to by most purchasers in the adjustment of purchases to income limitations, but many producers and middlemen do not realize so clearly that purchasers also make compromises in view of the lack of exact knowledge by manufacturers as to what to make or sell and in view of exact knowledge of the consumer as to what he wants. There are several types of compromises which consumers are therefore compelled to make. The first is based upon the inaccessibility of the commodities which would completely satisfy the consumer's desire. Such unavailability may be due to the present state of the arts of production, to the avoidable or unavoidable mistake of manufacturers, or to the mistake of middlemen who come into contact with the consumer. The second type of compromise…is based upon the consumer's own ignorance of his wants. Even though the precise type of product is available, the consumer's ignorance may cause or allow him to be influenced to buy something less satisfactory. The third common type of compromise is based upon…the extension of human wants to the point where, for the large majority of persons, it becomes impossible to supply all wants…The fourth type of compromise is based upon the attempt to secure conflicting qualities in products…As a whole, for many a producer, business tragedy would be the result if consumers were not willing to make compromises of one type or another with their desires (Tosdal, 1933/1940, pp. 87-88).

Each actor strives to find some middle ground: "With the vagueness of the consumer as to his own wants and the lack of knowledge by the manufacturer in determining the products to make, it is fortunate that purchasers are willing to make compromises" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 198). As indicated above, people had to accept goods which "could be easily procured" (ibid). These had to be roughly consistent with their "standard of living which did not permit more than the most limited choice" (ibid). To state the obvious, this is not the sovereign consumer of marketing lore (cf. Ward, 2009). It is arguably a more realistic representation of customer agency and pulls us back from a focus on the self-serving rhetoric of textbook authors, corporations, firms and advertising agencies, reconnecting us with some semblance of empirical realism[v] (e.g. Tosdal, 1939b, p. 511).

Consumers were not all alike: some were "deprived" and "less privileged" (Tosdal, 1942b, p. 76). Nor do we see past behaviour replicated in the future, as: "Actual purchases in the past represent compromises on the part of the consumer of a type which he may not be willing to repeat. Purchases and possessions may reflect mistakes in judgment on the part of both buyers and sellers" (Tosdal, 1939a, p. 12).

In the next section, we will examine the management of the sales force. These workers were, after all, on the front line. They came into contact with the compromising consumer. They facilitated the attainment of profit objectives. And the management strategies used to maximise their labour power that Tosdal describes take us firmly into the domain of infra-power, disciplinary tools and techniques, the psychological exploration of the individual and the formatting of practice so that it affirms goodwill.

Managing the Sales Force

Tosdal provides a thorough exegesis of sales force management. He bemoans the fact that the skills of psychologists and personnel management specialists are not more frequently used in employee selection (Tosdal, 1942b). Despite this, he outlines the various measures suitable for evaluating candidates for sales roles. This is a discourse of the examination which does not culminate with appointment, but was ongoing throughout the employment period (Foucault, 2015). Specifically, he lists a range of forms and documentation that the modern firm needed to produce, retain and revise over an employee's career. This is a movement beyond Frederick Taylor's empiricist epistemology. Tosdal is interested in the psychology of the individual, he seeks to "access the interior of the worker's life" (Jacques, 1996, p. 103). He refers to intelligence testing, the completion of tasks under examination conditions, psychological profiling and aptitude testing (e.g. Tosdal, 1933/1940, pp. 377-378). Given the criticism that character analysis, that is, the determination of intelligence, skills and personality traits via phrenology and physiognomy (Tadajewski, 2012) faced from academics, Tosdal dismisses it as "thoroughly discredited by scientists" (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 378).

His interest in evaluating sales people is not to enable recruitment of the best and the brightest. He follows Taylor's (1911/1998) logic in holding that those fulfilling a job should be suited for the task. If a role does not require intellectual ability or problem-solving skills, then there was no need to recruit someone with those abilities to the position. Doing so would cause dissatisfaction for the individual, lead to disruptive conduct and exacerbate labour turnover. In identifying people better suited to the selling task, these analytic procedures would maximise the likelihood that the selected individuals were able to form relationships with customers, cultivate their territory effectively and appropriately represent the company. Weaker staff were "weeded out" (Tosdal, 1933a, p. 163).

Tosdal's reflections on sales force management are reasonably consistent with scientific management and scientific sales management discourses. This said, we might also call him the anti-Taylor for reasons we will explain in a moment. Frederick Taylor (1911/1998), in case we have forgotten, argued that workers needed to be well trained, with management tasked with capitalising on employee productivity and earning potential by ascertaining the "one best way" of undertaking any given activity. He generally emphasised financial incentives as driving worker performance. Tosdal questioned this assumption.

Even so, Tosdal did articulate comparable ideas to Taylor about the "separation of planning from performance" (1921, p. 3). "Fact finding", efforts to determine production levels, calculate selling expenses, adjudicate minimum order numbers, and set credit and return policies, were given careful attention by senior staff. These were the conditions of possibility essential to firm efficiency (e.g. Tosdal, 1933a, p. 164). Management had to render the selling process more efficient for sales operatives by segmenting the market and tasking support staff with planning journeys and booking accommodation (cf. Tosdal, 1933b,

p. 305). The routes that sales workers travelled were subject to close scrutiny (cf. Tosdal, 1927, p. 58). They could be mapped visually at headquarters using the “map and tack” method (White, 1927). This involved literally plotting the locations visited by the sales person on to a map to determine whether they were serving the whole market. This hints at a significant issue. Sales practitioners were known for returning to customers who were easier sells and concomitantly avoiding people who were difficult or bought stock infrequently. Management needed to monitor staff practice to mitigate these problems.

He maintained that exposure to best practice was important for sales workers. They needed to follow high performing sales agents as they went about their regular routine. Likewise, neophyte salesmen could be provided with the knowledge, tools and techniques of selling through in-house training (Tosdal, 1923a) or via correspondence education (Tosdal, 1921). The latter was useful as it could be undertaken in the field, thereby providing them with another way to occupy their time outside of the saloon. Whatever methods were used, they had to be periodically revisited, otherwise skills and knowledge would degrade and efficiency decline (Tosdal, 1923b).

If we can reasonably call Tosdal, the anti-Taylor (at least in part), it is due to a number of opinions he expresses. While he applauds the scientific study of marketing, sales and distribution activities rather than the use of “rules of thumb”, he is well aware of how underdeveloped the field of sales management is compared to production control. We are beginning at ground zero, he registers. Those looking for a Taylorite “one best way” are going to be disappointed:

> The absence of general principles and the lack of collected data, upon which to develop principles are shown by the number and variety of problems which present themselves to sales executives and the utter lack of anything approaching a scientific standard of practice. There is no single correct solution for many of the problems in sales management; the successful solution in one enterprise may be unsuccessful in another (Tosdal, 1921, p. 5).

He makes an identical argument in his 1933 book (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 7), a related point about budgetary control (Tosdal, 1927, p. 96) and comparable statements regarding employee payment schemes: “there is no best compensation plan for any one size of firm or for any one type of industry” (1953d, p. 70). Tosdal deviates from Taylor in another consequential way. Salespeople, he realised, were not “logical”. They were not solely motivated by money: there were “limits” to “compensation in stimulating performance” (Tosdal, 1953c, p. 71; see also Hassard, 2012, p. 1446). Nor could they always be trusted, especially where their expense claims were concerned (e.g. Tosdal, 1953c, p. 78). It is for these reasons that he assiduously points out that methods of compensation were not replacements for management oversight, competency, integrity, assistance and fair treatment (Tosdal, 1923a, 1953d). Whether firms were large or small, “desk supervision” was not enough: “greater efficiency would undoubtedly be secured if active field supervision were furnished” (Tosdal, 1923b, p. 317).

In practice this meant that overt disciplinary management techniques (e.g. quotas internally set by the “impartial” “statistician” (Tosdal, 1927, p. 74); monitoring sales, signing off quotes and expenses) were used in conjunction with subtle emotional manipulation (Tosdal, 1942b, 1953c). Fleshing this point out, Tosdal devotes attention to the work of the sales foreman – an echo of Taylor’s own lexicon (i.e. the functional foreman) – and their role in improving productivity (Tosdal, 1923b, 1933/1940). This individual supervised fieldworkers and communicated best practice. Tellingly, the disciplinary implications of this role were downplayed, whilst the positive ramifications were underlined to sales workers. The foreman would help them increase their sales, meet their targets, and enhance their financial position. The benefits to the firm were compelling. If the foreman did their job, the company could stabilise its labour force. This was valuable. It enabled the retention of skilled workers, helped foster relationships between sales people, their customer base and the company, thereby easing future selling efforts. As anticipated, the sales foreman was a major node in information flows which supported head office control. Connected to this, they were a core conduit in processes of subjectification (see also Tosdal, 1921, p. 17):

> …sales foremen in large organizations provide a means of obtaining the much-needed contact between headquarters and field force, a contact which on the one hand enables the ideas and wishes of headquarters to be transmitted into the field more effectively, and on the other hand provides for the collection of information concerning conditions in the field and opinions which are of the utmost importance to the correct planning and direction of sales operations by the headquarters staff (Tosdal, 1923b, p. 317).

Further developing the point mentioned above, sales managers and foremen needed to respond to the "non-logical conduct of salesmen" in various ways (Tosdal, 1941, p. 217). Basically, this involved accentuating interaction between management and the sales worker. These relationships provided an "emotional" stimulus that helped achieve "satisfactory sales results" (Tosdal, 1941, p. 217). They fostered connections with travelling employees (e.g. Tosdal, 1941, p. 218). Sales contests, field trips by supervisors, sales conventions, combined with "inspirational" advice and the ability "to sympathize" (Tosdal, 1923a, p. 77) encouraged employee buy-in to policy, sales and profit objectives by buttressing internal organisational goodwill (Tosdal, 1927, 1933/1940).

Correspondence was thus very important. Managers would request reports about sales excursions. These were required on a regular basis: daily, weekly and monthly (e.g. Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 417). There was practically zero leeway for workers to avoid fulfilling these demands. The payment of their expenses was typically dependent on submitting such documentation. Moreover, salary and incentive schemes were often matched to business objectives. Tosdal wrote multiple papers on these issues and undertook a major literature and empirical study on compensation habits (e.g. Tosdal, 1953a, 1953b). Straight salary schemes that provided a set income were useful in that they reduced sales force anxiety about their wages, but did not always maintain high levels of motivation. Payment mechanisms that were contingent upon sales figures were more likely to foster enthusiasm and motivation, but risked encouraging high pressure selling tactics. Making employees cover their own costs led them to ignore missionary activities intended to cement goodwill (Tosdal, 1953c). Providing employees with remuneration based on profit sharing did garner adherents, but was usually viewed as complex and costly to administer and avoided (Tosdal, 1953a, 1953b, 1953d).

In the end, many companies used a fusion of the two main strategies: a reasonable guaranteed salary, with room for bonuses and incentives. This combination was important for another reason, namely the cultivation of goodwill and relationship development. Providing a baseline salary made it easier to get staff to undertake goodwill exercises. This connects Tosdal with recent attempts to rethink the history of relational discourse in marketing.

Goodwill, Customer Retention and Profit

When reading the history of marketing thought, whether this involves looking at the writings of retailers from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries or perusing the scholarly reflections of academics, the topics of mutual benefit, repeat custom and reciprocity are frequently reiterated (e.g. Keep *et al*., 1998; Larson, 2001; Tadajewski, 2008, 2009b, 2009c, 2015a, 2015b; Tadajewski and Saren, 2009). These debates display extensive overlap with those of the last twenty years which posit that relationship development is contingent upon the consummation of satisfying exchanges. Satisfaction, it is proposed, is predicated upon trust, commitment and mutual benefit (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Grönroos, 1994; O'Malley, 2014; O'Malley and Tynan, 1999), with the aim of relationship marketing being the achievement of customer retention which, in turn, generates increased profitability.

It is misleading to claim that marketing history can be distinguished into periods of transaction (i.e. one-shot) and relationship (i.e. longer-term) marketing. There does not seem to be any justification for this argument (cf. Brodie *et al*., 1997; Coviello *et al*., 2002; Tadajewski and Saren, 2009). Certainly, the picture is much more complicated than any blunt distinction lays bare (e.g. Tosdal, 1923b, p. 318, 1939b, p. 512). This is not a surprise for those familiar with the concept of goodwill. It has merited attention since 1580 (Black, 1992). The substantive focus of goodwill at this time was the sale of intangible values associated with a business, that is, with the transfer of reputation and accompanying promises not to compete in the same industry.

By 1743, the English legal system considered goodwill a result of continuous service by the operators of a business which was linked to its growth. At its most basic, goodwill was defined as "nothing more than the probability that the old customers will resort to the old place", that is, return to the same place of business repeatedly to complete exchanges (Eldon in Black, 1992, p. 82). Economists like Henry Sidgwick (19th century) and John Commons (early 20th century) were notable commentators on this issue. Sidgwick saw goodwill as a function of managerial skill. Their diligence, attention to detail, and service to their customer base, paid dividends in goodwill creation (Black, 1992, p. 93). It fostered habitual, repetitive actions which, it was hoped, would continue to generate profit for the merchant (e.g. Endres, 1985, pp. 638, 644).

John Commons' position is fairly similar (cf. Black, 1992, pp. 106-107). All firms, even if they are marginal in profit terms, need to develop goodwill. It is the lifeblood of the organisation. Fostering "customer relations" was indispensable as competitive pressure mounted. The most effective means of doing so was by providing satisfactory products, through performance of excellent service, adherence to an ethical code and the slow accumulation of a reputation for honesty and integrity (Black, 1992, 1994; Endres, 1985). This was an ongoing effort (Endres, 1985). As Commons explained in 1924,

> Modern business is conducted on borrowed capital in large amounts. Competitors are debtors. They must maintain the future solvency of their going business by keeping up their trade connections with material men, working men, and customers, all of which are properly summarized in the term "good-will." Good-will, though an intangible asset, is the most important asset of a modern business…each competitor should endeavor to retain his present customers and present proportion of the trade (Commons in Black, 1992, pp. 103-104).

Whereas Black (1992) notes that goodwill has occupied a very limited place in economic theory over the twentieth century, the same cannot be said of marketing and salesmanship. It was a major feature. Sometimes this was framed[vi] as "goodwill" – Tosdal's writing, as a case in point, is replete with references to it and related terms (e.g. 1957, p. 84). In other literature, the lexicon was dominated by "service" (Tadajewski, 2011b; in press) or "reciprocity", although the denotation remains fairly consistent (Tadajewski, 2009b).

It was the result of the personal connections between firm and customer; it was founded upon ethics – generally the Golden Rule – and the ideal that each transaction should result in mutual benefit, satisfaction and ongoing interactions (e.g. Tosdal, 1957, pp. 13, 26, 46, 61, 80, 83). Like the literature cited above, scholarship on goodwill realised that profit was a by-product of multiple transactions. The initial exchange was more likely to result in a financial loss – this was widely appreciated at the time – and features prominently in contemporary relational theory. As Tosdal avers:

> [The] Consumer's good will…is valued highly by business concerns and financial statements show that this valuation is often reflected in the balance sheet. Capitalization of such good will is frequently justified by business concerns upon the ground that its possession enables a manufacturer to effect economies in distribution…The sales manager's task is not completed when distributors are selected and orders taken, for in many lines it is not the first sale, but repeat sales, which go to make up a profitable business (Tosdal, 1921, pp. 14, 15).

This is not an idiosyncratic statement (McGarry, 1951; Tadajewski, 2011b; Tadajewski and Saren, 2009; White, 1927). In many of his publications, he makes equivalent remarks:

> …it is a well-known business fact that most transactions – e.g., purchases and sales – take place between parties who have had prior purchase and sales relationships. In other words, repeat sales predominate. The cost of initial sales is high, so high that competitive prices in many industries do not bear any close relation to [the] costs of initiating business relationships. To solidify these relationships, to create goodwill so that repeat sales may be made at smaller cost is the objective of every manufacturer. And, in various ways sellers endeavor to merit continued patronage, so that to a limited extent even adverse differences in price do not break up the relationship (Tosdal, 1933/1940, p. 194).

As if that was not enough to further puncture the myth of relationship marketing being a 1970s phenomenon, when he describes the connection between goodwill cultivation and profit in other contexts, Tosdal places us firmly within relational territory: "Even in very small stores, some effort to be agreeable and to induce repeat purchases may make the difference between success and failure" (Tosdal, 1957, p. 46). Chain retailers want to "get buyers to repeat their purchases and become steady customers" (ibid). Wholesalers exhibit related practices: "The objective of the far sighted wholesale executive includes building up good will…[because] the repeat sales upon which the wholesaler must depend for practically all of his business will be low cost sales" (Tosdal, 1949, p. 232; see also Tosdal, 1953d, p. 66).

Goodwill, he explains, is the oil "for future profitable business" (Tosdal, 1923b, p. 315) and sales executives and sales foremen had to foster relational sensibilities in their junior staff[vii] (e.g. Tosdal, 1949, p. 24). The connections that were eventually established sometimes went beyond purely instrumental associations. As he makes clear:

> Since most selling is done on a repeat basis, sellers get to know buyers and become friendly with them. Particularly in the sales of technical and complex products, the salesman develops friendships that cause him to serve his buyers and customers to a point substantially beyond the length required by a cold and calculating type of enlightened selfishness. The salesman who furnishes selling or merchandising services to customers is adding to the satisfactions that both his firm and customer feel as a

result of the purchasing transactions. But he also derives personal pleasure and satisfactions from the relationship with customers (Tosdal, 1957, p. 83).

Throughout these discussions there was sensitivity to the fact that reward systems, management-employee relations and various other elements could either affirm or retard customer relations and harm the efficiency of the firm in the long-run (Tosdal, 1953a). As such, a substantial amount of reflection was devoted to figuring out how salesmen could be stimulated to undertake activities liable to generate goodwill. The problem with goodwill work was that sales were often slow to develop and if the reward structure used sales volume or profits as its sole metric, then salary payments would drop in the short to medium term as goodwill was fanned. In view of this, Tosdal proposed that sales workers must be evaluated on the basis of the tasks they have been set. Put differently, "it is desirable to recognize goodwill work openly and formally by assigning credit and payment for it" (Tosdal, 1953c, p. 76).

Like Taylor (1911/1998), he seeks to encourage employers to treat their workforces appropriately. Sales people were not naïve. They understood how the reward system structured their behaviour and were critical of attempts to delimit their conduct without receiving some level of reciprocal reward. Given the infrequency with which this material is cited in the contemporary marketing literature, the level of nuance it illuminates, and how it spotlights the fostering and undermining of firm-consumer relations, his analysis is worth repeating. In reference to a rubber band company and its commission-oriented incentive structure, Tosdal writes:

> The incentive of commissions is always directed toward the increase of the base [line of sales]. That incentive is current and immediate and usually directed towards immediate sales and profits of the current period. Other effort is secondary even though important to the employer and in the longer run to the salesman himself. Some salesmen feel that sales work directed toward the building of goodwill is not really part of their responsibility…Others, more sophisticated and possibly more cynical, point out that executives frequently talk about building goodwill but in the final analysis judge men by reference solely to results for the immediate period. They may go on to point out that shifting of territories and turnover of sales-force may well prevent a salesman from getting any benefit from goodwill work. The incentive which a straight commission plan provides may be powerful but it may not be directed toward the best interest of the employer. If commission is based on sales volume, the salesman's effort is logically to get a greater amount of sales in the present, even at the expense of future relations with customers and other buyers. Conversely, the salesman feels less incentive to perform those [goodwill] tasks of long-run import, giving advice and help to buyers, technical help, training of dealer salesmen, display help, and a multitude of other types of work *which eventually help build better customers and larger buyers*. The failure of commission salesmen in many cases to do such work is to be laid partly at the shortsightedness of those salesmen, partly to a realistic attitude that he may not be able to cash in eventually on such efforts, but management may likewise have failed in policy and direction of salesmen (Tosdal, 1953a, pp. 136-137).

Much like recent discussions of relationship marketing, confidence, commitment and trust are important facilitators of ongoing, profitable company-customer connections in Tosdal's writings. This is abundantly illustrated by the interactions a wholesaler can have with a retailer and he explicitly differentiates these relations from "one-time sales":

> The best type of salesmanship for an extensive array of product lines is that in which the confidence of the retailer is developed so that the salesman becomes a trusted buying advisor and his house becomes a source of many products. With that as background, the salesman may add the functions of selling or management counsel on occasion. The average wholesale salesman can push and does push only a few products at an interview but these are secondary to the general effort to maintain the retailer as a general customer and to maintain the position of the house as an important supplier to the retail buyer. Even for…wholesale distributors, the need for building repeat sales, retailer interest and good will must often be the basic theme…In the minority, on the other hand, are those wholesalers whose business depends primarily on occasional or one-time sales. Only there can the wholesaler be content with the traditional aggressive "pushing" salesmanship (Tosdal, 1949, p. 239).

At various stages the goodwill achieved could "be destroyed" (Tosdal, 1953a, p. 44; see also Tosdal, 1933/1940, pp. 185, 299). Registering this, the organisation had to coordinate its actions to repeat past successes (e.g. Tosdal, 1953c, p. 71) and efforts should be made to "eliminate dissatisfaction which is an obstacle to future sales" (Tosdal, 1921, p. 11):

> …goodwill, once created, is perishable and it may well be destroyed before its potential value has been realized. A salesman in opening a new territory or adding a new customer may do an excellent job in establishing preference for his product and good will for his employer…If, however, the initial work is not followed up properly, or if orders are not properly filled, or credit situations are tactlessly handled, the buyer may be offended and the task of creating goodwill with the prospective buyer will have been resultless (Tosdal, 1953a, p. 44).

This is where the sales foreman had a further role to play. They were in place to help deal with any issues that could cause relationships to deconstruct. Positioning their contribution in terms that speak to disciplinary control and customer assistance, Tosdal writes:

> Not infrequently the sales foreman will be expected to make up for the shortcomings of salesmen…He may undertake to facilitate adjustments with customers…The elimination of the delay and red tape necessary to effect such adjustments…may be productive of much good-will. In general, the function of the sales foreman is, therefore, to assist the salesmen in producing greater sales and in laying the foundation of good-will for future business (Tosdal, 1923b, p. 318).

The fact that goodwill was an influential facet of marketplace relations meant that the debates continued to rage even when firms were not able to service their customers with new products. This was the case during World War II. According to Tosdal (1943), there were two schools of thought. Some companies halted goodwill efforts. They saved their resources for the post-war period when environmental conditions were likely to be turbulent (wars are followed by depression or boom). These represented the minority. Other firms continued goodwill activities: "They send sales representatives to help make better use of products already sold, to help customers readjust operations to production, to help them get substitute supplies from other sources. They may continue to advertise although they may assert frankly they cannot deliver at this time" (Tosdal, 1943, p. 15).

Tosdal, therefore, provides us with a complex picture of marketing practice from the 1920s onwards. It is a representation that jars with received wisdom in many respects. He emphasised the role of marketing management, product planning, called for customer focus, drew attention to a variety of methods to study the marketplace, ways to condition the sales force and all of these activities were directed to promoting goodwill. This was the means to cement the financial health of the firm. Many of these elements of his writing have not been unearthed previously.

What was certainly not registered by prior research is the concept of the compromising consumer. Arguably, this conceptual framing is very important for marketing theory. It is a more realistic representation of human agency than the idea that the customer is a sovereign actor. Furthermore, it was echoed by his contemporaries. And it firmly resonates with the experiences of most people who have to negotiate the marketplace without a lottery win burning a hole in their wallet, professional buyers and advisors at their elbow and industry simpering to provide bespoke products on request.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the contributions of Harry Tosdal, a pioneer of sales and marketing management. We engaged in a close reading of his books and academic papers to make a case that he punctures a number of marketing myths. These included the idea that the marketing concept was a 1950s phenomenon; that business operators pursued sales volume without regard to other metrics; and that relationship marketing is a 1970s singularity.

Tosdal leaves us with a complex picture of business activities from the 1920s onwards. He articulates an arguably more empirically realistic conception of the consumer compared to those promoted through textbooks, monographs and journal articles today. The respondent to market research requests was shown to be forgetful as well as liable to mislead and misrepresent their behaviour.

The overall conception of the consumer underpinning his publications is a marked contrast to the sovereign individual routinely invoked in marketing theory. Tosdal points out that we make many compromises when we negotiate the marketplace. The same is said of producers, wholesalers, retailers and other institutional actors. The ontology of the marketplace is thus characterised by compromise in many ways. This is a very obvious point. But things only become obvious when they are pointed out by people who have given them considerable thought. We consequently have Tosdal to thank for elucidating this alternative figure of the consumer – a figure that until now has not been adequately recognised by historians of marketing theory.

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[i] Tosdal provides a nuanced picture of the creation of goodwill. He devotes attention to distinguishing between profitable, potentially profitable and unprofitable customers (e.g. Tosdal, 1933b). The last group often received very limited contact, a revised sales mix (i.e. telephone communications rather than personal selling) or no contact unless they served some important organisational need. Ideally, contact would be reduced and order sizes increased until these groups became profitable, although he registered that this would be a difficult task. What he did appreciate was that careful "customer analyses" and a concomitant avoidance of small orders, unprofitable customers and the like, could move a business from losing money to financial security (e.g. Tosdal, 1933b, p. 304). Careful scrutiny of the client list was therefore imperative.

[ii] The pursuit of profit is not unproblematic (see also Nyland *et al*., 2014, p. 1159). But, in the context of Tosdal's writings, it is nearly always connected with the ideas of mutual benefit, customer satisfaction, repeat custom, ethics and he makes concerted efforts to justify how these micro-level exchanges have positive ramifications for society. The latter issue is most notably a feature of his publications in the Post World War II era which make a case for the U.S. economic structure over planned systems. In publications from the later 1950s, for example, he remarks about the classless nature of U.S. society, the fluidity of movement (with sufficient hard work) from poverty to wealth, the declining issues around income inequality and product access and he frequently juxtaposes these arguments against the appeals of socialism and communism. His assertions need to be taken with a strong pinch of salt. See the special issue of the *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* on the Cold War period, especially Peacock (2016), for more on this point.

[iii] Just to be clear, the extent to which these were revolutionary ideas is contested. Marketing historians have flagged up the presence of related themes in a number of earlier historical periods and Tosdal himself registers that the more adept sales and marketing practitioners were often engaged in serving the customer, paying attention to their needs and delivering products at the right price point, right time, and correct location much earlier than the 1930s. It is reasonably common in early texts to make reference to ancient precedents that illuminate marketing concept and consumer oriented-types of practices.

[iv] Methodologically this assumption gained centre stage in marketing thought via conjoint analysis. This has its origins in roughly the same period when Tosdal was starting to write – the 1920s – and was very prominent from the 1970s onwards in the hands of Paul Green (e.g. Green and Srinivasan, 1975).

[v] Through advertising and marketing communications, the producer seeks to ensure "similarity in desire" and avoid the "whims of individuals" (Tosdal, 1936, p. 197; see also Tosdal, 1940, p. 66). The consumer, on the other hand, has shifting needs and exhibits a range of knowledge depending on the context. They are not, in other words, simply an

"analytic consumer" (possess complete knowledge) nor "imperfect consumers" (possess fragmented knowledge) (Kennedy and Laczniak, 2016). In some cases, they will be closer to the former; in others, closer to the latter. What they are not, Tosdal maintains, is very easily manipulated. This differentiates his work from someone like the young Helen Woodward (Tadajewski, 2013) who considered the consumer as credulous. Tosdal's perspective is closer to the representation of the consumer reflected in empirical studies of advertising effectiveness appearing at the same time. These foregrounded the critical interpretive skills of people when exposed to advertising (Tadajewski, 2016a). He extends these arguments to include marketing, advertising and salesmanship. In other words, people realised that "The help of sellers has usually been so biased and so limited from the viewpoint of the consumer…that he tends to discount the efforts of sellers to help him" (Tosdal, 1936, p. 197). Like his contemporaries, Tosdal is critical of the underdeveloped state of research on marketing communications – particularly studies that explain how to combine multiple channels. This should alert us to the fact that he is offering an advanced insight into marketing communications that has not been factored into historical studies of Integrated Marketing Communications previously. His statements reflect a recognition of the need to communicate via multiple channels (e.g. Tosdal, 1923a, p. 77, 1927, pp. 83, 88-91). For instance, "Theoretically, it may be said that every selling executive is working toward a selling program embodying an ideal proportion of personal salesmanship, advertising, and other available means of performing selling functions so that he can effect distribution at minimum cost and maximum long-run profit for the seller. That such an optimum proportion exists is only conjectural, but there is much evidence to support the point of view that in given situations some proportions are better than others" (Tosdal, 1940, p. 69). While the extent to which these alternative communications tools are used in synergistic fashion is not always clear, he does indicate that they "correlate" with (e.g. Tosdal, 1921, p. 11, 1923b, p. 317, 1933/1940, p. 415) or "supplement" each other (e.g. Tosdal, 1949, p. 237). In other places, Tosdal reverses the process and traces how the buyer digests multiple communications mediums: "The principal work of most purchasing agents is to make selections using all the aids which the seller furnishes in the way of salesmen, service men, correspondence, catalogues, and other sales literature in an effort to go beyond the offerings made by personal solicitation" (Tosdal, 1940, p. 66). At times, he limits himself to expressing dismay about the current horizons of knowledge: "We have no positive knowledge…regarding the combination of selling forces used to influence human behavior" (Tosdal, 1936, p. 201).

[vi] It is apparent that Tosdal (1942b) does perceive the cultivation and maintenance of goodwill in terms of fostering habitual behaviour. Goodwill, he appreciates, is a "valuable but intangible asset" and "Goodwill involves habit, in fact, consists of habits. Habits gradually change and disappear if not exercised. Habits represent "grooved" channels of conduct where certain actions become easier" (Tosdal, 1942b, p. 79).

[vii] He does not advocate maintaining close relations irrespective of cost: "Only for a few types of manufacturers to whom particular retailers are of special importance is it possible that direct relationships can be profitably established and maintained" (Tosdal, 1949, p. 240).